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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KINSHASA 000882

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [CG](#) [RW](#)  
SUBJECT: KABILA, OTHER LEADERS AGREE ON POLITICAL AND  
DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY TO REDUCE TENSIONS IN EAST

REF: A. KINSHASA 855

[1](#)B. KINSHASA 846

Classified By: PolCouns DBrown, reasons 1.4 b/d

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. President Kabila, Prime Minister Gizenga and the presidents of the National Assembly, Senate and Supreme Court met July 23 in an initial inter-institutional meeting. They agreed to Kamerhe's proposal for political and diplomatic strategies to reduce tensions in the east and re-establish diplomatic relations with Rwanda. They also reportedly discussed the possible return of MLC leader Jean-Pierre Bemba and differences over the accreditation of National Assembly deputies. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) President Joseph Kabila, Prime Minister Antoine Gizenga, National Assembly President Vital Kamerhe, Senate President Kengo wa Dondo and Supreme Court President Benoit Luamba reviewed key political questions July 23 at the first meeting of the leaders of the post-transition institutions. They issued no official statement following it, but we understand that at least three issues were discussed: continued insecurity in the two Kivu provinces, the possible return of MLC leader Senator Jean-Pierre Bemba from Portugal, and relations between the Parliament and Supreme Court. Kamerhe told the Ambassador July 23 that the so-called inter-institutional meeting had lasted 3-4 hours and characterized it as "very, very good."

[1](#)3. (C) Kamerhe told the Ambassador that the other leaders at the meeting had agreed to his proposal for a political and diplomatic strategy to reduce tensions in North and South Kivu. He said it would include a conference bringing together the various ethnic communities; the now-discredited term "roundtable" has been discarded. This inter-community dialogue would be organized by non-governmental bodies, including churches, with the support of government authorities, and be held locally. "That's where the problem is," Kamerhe said, not in a distant center such as Kisangani or Kinshasa. Target date is September or October. He said the issue would be presented to a meeting of provincial governors and assembly presidents scheduled for Kinshasa next week.

[1](#)4. (C) Kamerhe reported that the DRC leaders had also adopted a four-step diplomatic strategy to re-establish diplomatic relations with Rwanda. First step would be a meeting between foreign ministers; second, formalizing contact between provincial leaders and institutions on the Congolese-Rwandan border; third, establishing consulates in the respective cities on the border (Gisenyi, Goma, Cyangugu, Bukavu); and fourth, exchange of ambassadors. Kamerhe

appealed for support from the diplomatic community for this initiative. He said Rwandan Foreign Minister Charles Murigande was in basic agreement with this general approach, and had accepted the invitation of Congolese Minister of State for External Relations for a meeting at a yet-to-be-determined date. Kamerhe also said that that provincial-level contacts had already begun, and that Kabila planned to visit the eastern DRC in August or September.

15. (C) Kengo had told the Ambassador several hours prior to the inter-institutional meeting that the issue of Bemba would be discussed. Kengo provided no details, but noted that Bemba has written Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, EU foreign ministers, the Secretary and the Canadian foreign minister stating his eagerness to return, willingness to support democratic institutions and readiness to accept new security arrangements. Kengo stated that, in his opinion, it would be better to have Bemba in the country, where he could be more easily controlled than outside. He also expressed opposition to a trial of Bemba for treason, saying it could have a destabilizing effect in Kinshasa, where Bemba still enjoys wide support. Kengo also indicated that there is no active move in the Senate to lift Bemba's parliamentary immunity to prosecution.

16. (C) A report in the July 24 edition of the Kinshasa daily Le Palmares indicated that differences between the Assembly and Court over the accreditation of a number of deputies was on the agenda. The article highlighted an acrimonious debate during the Assembly's final week in which many deputies denounced corruption in the Court's invalidation of the elections of 18 deputies and their replacement by rivals. In the end, the Assembly adopted Kamerhe's proposal to accept the Court's order as constitutional, and employ an

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inter-institutional meeting to initiate a process leading to sanction of any corrupted magistrates.

17. (C) Comment: Given the stated preferences of these principals, it is predictable that an inter-institutional meeting would be pushing political moves, not military. The agreement on a political and diplomatic strategy aimed at resolving long-festering issues remaining from Congo's civil war is a welcome development. Lack of any public announcement regarding it only emphasizes the continuing sensitive nature of the issues that have hindered resolution for years. End comment.

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